

## State of Connecticut

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

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MEMBER  
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE  
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

#### Government Administration and Elections Committee Public Testimony Monday, March 17, 2014

#### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 5550 AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONVEYANCE OF CERTAIN PARCELS OF STATE LAND

Dear Senator Musto, Representative Jutila, Senator McLachlan, Representative Hwang and esteemed members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today regarding two different conveyances that will benefit two separate towns that I am honored to represent in the 34<sup>th</sup> District.

The first is a unique situation in East Haddam. The town applied for and was granted a large STEAP grant to develop the first of its kind agri-center in the State of Connecticut. It was modeled after volunteer commission members attended site visits to a similar project in Vermont. The STEAP award will develop an agricultural business incubator and community farm. The Center for Community Agriculture at Harris Farm will serve as an agricultural business incubator for new farmers, a technical resource for new and existing agricultural businesses, and a community farm for area residents. The town will engage the Middlesex County Farm Bureau, UConn Agricultural Extension Service, the 4-H Program, and the Vo-Ag program at Nathan Hale-Ray High School for technical resources and education. They estimate the community farm will support 20 full and part-time jobs. The property to be conveyed is a small strip of land that runs parallel to Mt. Parnassus Road and adjacent to the future agri-business. Currently it is an abandoned rest area that was given to the State to pay homage to an important local citizen, Captain George Comer. Unfortunately, it has not been properly maintained by DEEP and the town would be in a much better position to care for it. Near the present site of the monument, the Conservation and Agricultural Commission would like to re-dedicate the memorial with new picnic tables and create a new entrance into the agri-center. In doing so, it would become a focal point once again and bring attention to the Comer family legacy. I have spoken to his great grandson Thomas Comer and it is at his request that I submit the modification in bill language, today. Attached to my testimony is also a reprint of an article detailing the agri-center project.

Sec. 8. (*Effective from passage*) (a) Notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes, the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection shall convey to the town of East Haddam three parcels of land located in the town of East Haddam, at a cost equal to the administrative costs of making such conveyance. The first parcel of land is identified as lot 59 on the town of East Haddam Tax Assessor's Map 39, conveyed to the state of Connecticut by Captain George Comer in a deed recorded in the town of East Haddam land records at volume 51, page 413, and has an area of approximately .35 acre. The second parcel is identified as lot 60 on the town of East Haddam Tax Assessor's Map 39, and has an area of approximately .89 acre. The third parcel is identified as lot 58 on the town of East Haddam Tax Assessor's Map 39 and has an area of approximately 1.2 acres. The second and third parcels were conveyed to the state of Connecticut by Captain George Comer in a deed recorded in the town of East Haddam land records at volume 51, page 509. The conveyance shall be subject to the approval of the State Properties Review Board.

(b) ~~Notwithstanding a~~ A certain restriction contained in the deed from Captain George Comer to the state of Connecticut, dated July 10, 1935, and recorded on October 17, 1935, in the town of East Haddam Land Records in volume 51, page 509, that the two parcels conveyed in said deed constituting the second and third parcels described in subsection (a) of this section were conveyed for recreational and demonstration purposes, shall be maintained. ~~the~~ The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection may convey said parcels to the town of East Haddam ~~free of said restriction~~, provided, if said parcels are so conveyed, the town of East Haddam may only use said parcels for open space; ~~recreational, agricultural and municipal and passive recreation purposes.~~ The town shall maintain the Comer monument in its current location and may construct a driveway at the Comer monument to access the town's open space and municipal property, which is adjacent to and south of these parcels. The town shall also use the first parcel of land for said purposes. If the town of East Haddam:

- (1) Does not use said parcels for said purposes;
- (2) Does not retain ownership of all of said parcels; or
- (3) Leases all or any portion of said parcels,

the parcel shall revert to the state of Connecticut. Nothing in this section shall terminate any reversionary interest in the second and third parcels described in subsection (a) of this section that may exist in the successors and heirs of Captain George Comer.

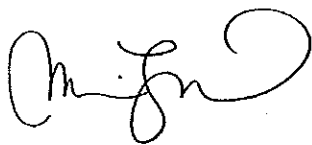
(c) The State Properties Review Board shall complete its review of the conveyance of said parcel of land not later than thirty days after it receives a proposed agreement from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. The land shall remain under the care and control of said department until a conveyance is made in accordance with the provisions of this section. The State Treasurer shall execute and deliver any deed or instrument necessary for a conveyance under this section, which deed or instrument shall include provisions to carry out the purposes of subsection (b) of this section. The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection shall have the sole responsibility for all other incidents of such conveyance.

The second parcel to be conveyed is contained within Section 10 of the bill, pertaining to the Town of Colchester. I have worked closely with the First Selectman to make sure that the correct language and mapping was complete and there are no modifications to the language, at this time. This parcel hosts a

Municipal Sewage Pump Station that also serves the brand new DOT facility on the adjoining site in addition to other public and private customers. It may serve additional public safety needs for Colchester in the future. The town has been working closely with DOT for several years as plans were made for the new facility and Colchester shouldered much of the expense for the design of the plant. In return, the DOT has been a great partner by providing much of the mapping that is contained with this application and is supportive of the transfer.

Thank you so much for including these two very important conveyances in Bill 5550. They are both critical in the future planning of two very worthy projects in my community.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Ziobron', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Melissa Ziobron  
State Representative  
34<sup>th</sup> District